

uncovered

DIGGING
THROUGH
THE PRAYERS
OF GOD'S PEOPLE

FAMILY WORSHIP PACKET

South Shores Church

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Recommended Family Worship & Parenting Resources

To the families that make up *the* family of South Shores Church

*“Friends, if you wish to give your children a blessing when you die, **then be a blessing to them while you live.** If you want to make your last words worth hearing, **then let your whole life be worth the seeing.**” Charles Spurgeon*

WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY

The Idea Behind the Series: Our teaching series, UNCOVERED: Digging Through the Prayers of God's People, takes the approach of an archaeologist digging down layer by layer to reveal the different periods of time and the people who lived there. Each week we journey deeper into the trench and further back in time to see the condition of God's people, how they reach out to Him in prayer and what it tells us about who God is. Join us as we discover real people of history, the Bible and prayer who served and loved the same real God we worship today.

Why This Booklet? South Shores Church desires to encourage and assist parents in the spiritual leadership of their families. This booklet, guiding Family Worship devotions, is one way we are seeking to integrate the Sunday morning gathering into the weekly pattern of families. Our hope is that as parents you will continually reflect back on the message of the previous weekend and use it to launch new discussions with your children, preparing your family to celebrate Easter and the new life Jesus offers.

Purpose of Study: 1) As families, to reflect on God's character shown in His response to the people of the Old Testament who prayed to Him for specific needs. 2) To prepare our families to celebrate Easter by seeing the BIG picture of God's love meeting our greatest need – forgiveness of sin.

How to Use This Booklet:

- 1) Spend time reflecting on the previous weekend's sermon:** review your notes, answer the personal reflection questions provided in the sermon notes, and spend time in prayer asking for God's Spirit to bring to mind ONE key thought from the sermon you want to teach to your children.
- 2) Read over the summary of the passage provided** each week to gain an understanding of how to communicate to your children the context of the story from the Bible you are about to read. The younger your children are, the more you will have to simplify your summary of what was happening with the people of God.
- 3) Look over the suggested questions:** Decide which of the questions you will ask your children. You have freedom to use these questions as you see fit. Please do not feel you must ask every question; you know your family best and some questions might not be appropriate for your family. We have provided suggested questions for older kids and teens, which we feel are appropriate for 3rd or 4th grade on up, and some suggested activities for younger kids. If your family has children in both groups (like I, Pastor Dave, do) then you may want to choose a few questions/activities from each group.
- 4) Use the "Looking Forward to Easter" questions** at the end to help your family think about how the whole story of God in the Bible points to Jesus. You may want to research additional activities you can do together as a family to prepare your family to celebrate the true impact of Easter in our lives.
- 5) We strongly encourage you to memorize the selected Bible verse each week.** While we have shortened the verse for younger families, your family may want to choose to memorize the whole verse or even the verses surrounding it as well. Take time as the weeks progress to review verses previously memorized.

6) Close the Family Worship each week in prayer, encouraging each family member to participate in a small way praying to God.

7) Each study will provide additional passages of Scripture you can read as a family on other days if you desire to host a Family worship devotional more than once a week.

8) At the end of this booklet we have provided extra resources; these include the introductory video shown on Sundays, which you can show your children to provide additional context. We have also provided additional resources to provide you more information and training on leading Family Worship and recommended resources on parenting.

A Note for the Readers: We are very excited for your family to take this incredible journey together, studying God's Truth and sharing spiritual experiences to grow closer to Jesus and each other as a family. Please share stories with us of what you experience with your family through these devotionals, and know that we, as a church staff, are praying for you in this season of preparation with your children.

Your input is greatly appreciated and valued in order to make future versions of these devotional guides more helpful for the church body as a whole. Email pastordave@southshores.org with your stories, comments, insights, feedback and questions.

God Bless your journey!

FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE WEEK 1

God's Kindness meets Our Greatest Need (Ezra 9:5-15)

"Though we are slaves, our God has not deserted us in our bondage."

Ezra 9:9a

Summary of the Passage: *God faithfully and graciously brought the Israelites back from seventy years of exile, but they turned their backs to Him by marrying foreign people around them and worshipping foreign gods instead. Ezra, a godly priest was sent by God to teach, guide and pastor His people back to Him (cf. Ezra 7:6,10). Ezra saw what the Israelites have done and responded in a godly manner. He mourned and cried out to God in prayer (9:5-6), confessed sins on behalf of the people (9:7), recognized the grace and kindness of God in bringing them back from exile (9:8-9), acknowledged that God warned them of the very sin they had committed (9:10-12) and asked God for undeserved mercy in the face of their sin upon their repentance (9:13-15). In this passage we see that sins are not to be taken lightly because God doesn't take them lightly. We find that mercy is needed if sins are to be cleared from those who have committed them.*

For Families With Older Kids and Teenagers: *Parents read the summary of the passage to discover the context of this historical event.*

As a family read Ezra 9:5-15 (Ezra's prayer of repentance).

- 1. What can we learn about God's character and action from Ezra's confession?*
- 2. Describe experiences where we, as a family, have experienced these same qualities of God.*
- 3. In the BIG picture of history, how did God demonstrate he has not deserted us but shown us kindness?*
- 4. How does this story look forward to Jesus?*
- 5. Spend time as a family memorizing the key verse of the week (Ezra 9:9a).*

Looking Forward to Easter

- 1. How is the Cross an example that God did not desert us because of our sinful choices but instead demonstrates His loving kindness for us?*
- 2. Read Romans 5:8 to finish your time together.*

Digging Deeper...

In this passage we find a prayer from Ezra who was brought back from exile, but why was Israel in exile in the first place? Read Jeremiah 25:1-14 to find out why and prepare for next weeks study in Daniel 9:3-19.

For Families With Younger Kids:

“Simple” Summary of the Situation

During the time that Ezra lived, the people of Israel were doing things God had specifically told them not to do. They were breaking God’s rules that He gave them because He loved them. Even the priests, who should have been setting a good example for the people, were doing terrible things. This made Ezra very upset. He was so angry and sad that he tore his clothes and pulled out the hair on his head and his beard (OUCH!) Ezra sat like this for a long time, then he fell on his knees and prayed to God.

Why Do We Have Rules?

- 1. Does your family have rules to keep you safe?*
- 2. Does your family have rules to help you get along with each other?*
- 3. God has rules to help His family live life. What are some of those rules?*

What About When Rules Get Broken?

- 4. How do the people in your family feel when the rules are broken?*
- 5. How do you think God feels when His people don’t follow His rules?*

Remember; even when you break the family rules, your parents still love you. And God still loved the people of Israel when they were doing terrible things they knew were wrong.

What Does It Mean to Confess?

When Ezra prayed, He thanked God for continuing to love and take care of Israel even when they were doing wrong. Ezra was also “confessing” the people’s sins. Confessing means telling God what you have done wrong (even though He already knows) and telling Him that you are sorry and asking for Him to forgive you.

- 6. Do you have anything you need to confess to God? Is there anything you are doing wrong that you need to tell God that you are sorry for?*

ACTIVITY: Here is an object lesson to help kids understand that God always knows what we do called “Sins Revealed” <http://www.kidssundayschool.com/Gradeschool/Objects/1object06.php>

FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE WEEK 2

Understanding our Need in light of who God is (Daniel 9:3-19)

"The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him."

Daniel 9:9

Summary of the Passage: *While reading the Bible (specifically the book of Jeremiah), Daniel, a faithful Jew living during Israel's exile, realizes that their "seventy years" of separation (v. 2) are almost up. Daniel turns to God in prayer and fasting asking that He would have mercy for Jerusalem. In his prayer, Daniel confesses the sins of his people in breaking their covenant with God and acknowledges the validity of God's punishment against them (v. 5-15). He then pleads with God to pour out His grace on the basis of His righteousness (v. 16), mercy (v. 18) and for the glory of His great name (v. 19).*

For Families With Older Kids and Teenagers: *Parents read the summary of the passage to discover the context of this historical event.*

As a family read Daniel 9:3-19 (Daniel's prayer of repentance).

- 1. What can we learn about God's character and action from Daniel's confession?*
- 2. How would you explain "mercy" and "forgiveness" to friends at school? What are examples of mercy and forgiveness? Try not to use God as your example. (Was it easy or hard to come up with examples who are not God? Why?)*
- 3. What was Daniel's plea for mercy based on? (see vs. 9, 16, 17, 18, 19)*
- 4. "At the root of every problem in the world is mankind's rebellion against God." Agree or Disagree? Why? What are the consequences of rebellion?*
- 5. Are there any issues occurring in our family that we need to extend mercy and forgiveness to one another?*
- 6. Spend time as a family memorizing the key verse of the week (Daniel 9:9).*

Looking forward to Easter

- 1. How does this story look forward to Jesus meeting our greatest need: forgiveness of sin?*
- 2. Read Romans 3:23-26 to finish your time together.*

Digging Deeper...

In this passage we heard the prayer of Daniel pleading for the mercy of God on behalf of God's people, yet this wasn't the only time when Israel was in need of God's mercy. Read 2 Kings 18:13-37 to prepare for next week and to see another time where God's people were in dire need of God's rescue.

For Families With Younger Kids

“Simple” Summary of the Situation

Daniel understood that the city of Jerusalem had been destroyed and the people driven out because God’s people had sinned, broken God’s rules for living. Just like Ezra, Daniel’s response to this situation is to pray. He asks God to forgive Israel for their sins against Him. He also points out that the cause of all the bad things that have happened to God’s people has been their fault because they were disobedient. But Daniel knows God well. He has studied the Bible and knows that God loves His people and has saved them in the past.

Learning about God from the Bible

*Talk about some Bible stories where God saves His people.
(Noah and his family in the ark, the escape from Egypt, Joseph in Egypt, etc.)*

1. *What can we learn from these stories about God?*

What does it mean to forgive someone?

God is perfect, righteous, does nothing wrong. We are not like God. We do things we are not supposed to all the time. But God is willing to forgive us.

2. *What does it mean to “forgive”?*
3. *What does it mean when our friends or family members forgive us?*
4. *Is it hard to forgive other people who hurt us?*

Think about how amazing it is that the perfect, holy God loves to forgive us!

Do you need to forgive someone?

Spend some time thinking and praying for people who have done things wrong.

You may also need to pray for God to forgive you.

FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE WEEK 3

Living by Faith in the Tough Times (2 Kings 19:14-19)

"Now, O Lord our God deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O LORD, are God." 2 Kings 19:19

Summary of the Passage: Judah has come under attack and is surrounded by the Assyrian army (2 Kings 18:1). After enduring scathing threats from Sennacherib (the Assyrian king; 2 Kings 18:28-25) and being reassured by Isaiah the prophet of God's sure deliverance, Hezekiah pleads with God for him to save them from their enemies hand so all the earth may know that He alone is God.

For Families With Older Kids and Teenagers: Parents read the summary of the passage to discover the context of this historical event.

As a family read 2 Kings 19:14-19 (Hezekiah's prayer for help).

1. What can we learn about God's character and action from Hezekiah's petition to God?
2. What do you think is the significance of Hezekiah's confession to God, "you alone are God over all the kingdoms (vs.15)"? (Hint: the threat to Israel was an earthly kingdom)
3. The threat to Israel was very real; the other nations' gods were false and unable to help them in the difficult time. Yet Hezekiah's faith in the LORD God's character prompts him to pray – share examples of how our family has demonstrated faith in God during tough times of the past. What have we witnessed God do?
4. What will be the result of people witnessing God's deliverance from tough times (vs.19)?
5. Spend time as a family memorizing the key verse of the week (Hezekiah 19:19).

Looking Forward to Easter

1. How does this story look forward to Jesus? (Read Romans 5:17 for more discussion.)
2. Read Hebrews 10:19-25 to finish your time together.

Digging Deeper...

Next week we will be looking into another prayer from another king of Judah, Solomon. Read 1 Kings 8:22-53 to prepare and to see a prayer offered in good times rather than dire times, as our passage this last week has been.

For Families With Younger Kids

“Simple” Summary of the Situation

The people of God are under attack. The Assyrians have destroyed all the armies of the nations around Israel. Those defeated people had prayed to their gods to save them, but it had not worked. Now the king of Assyria was making fun of God’s people, saying that their God was no different than the gods of the other countries that had already been beaten. When Hezekiah, the king of God’s people, heard this he tore his clothes (just like Ezra) and went to the temple to pray. He praised and glorified God, which means to thank God for who He is. You have to know someone well to be able to talk about who they are.

How Do We Know What God is Like?

1. What does creation tell us about God?
2. What are some other stories from the Bible that tell us about God?
3. What can we learn about God from our family’s history?
4. How has God shown that He is powerful and loves us?

Learning to Praise

We can praise each other for the good things in our hearts and in our actions. Take turns saying nice things about each person in your family.

Praising God

Now go around and each take turns saying something that is true about God, praise Him together for the things that are said.

FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE WEEK 4

Seeking God (1 Kings 8:22-53)

“...may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you.” 1 Kings 8:52b

Summary of the Passage: The ark of the covenant arrives in the newly finished temple (vv. 1–13) and Solomon addresses the people about the significance of this event (vv. 14–21). He then turns to address God, reflecting on the nature of God’s “dwelling” in the temple and offering a prayer with seven requests for those who will approach Him in the temple (each section involves a plea that God should “hear from heaven”; vv. 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49). The temple is an important building, but God is not confined by a building and is certainly not dependent on it. He will survive its destruction and will hear His people’s prayers when they go into exile. Likewise, obedience to the law is very important, but Solomon holds out hope for restoration even when the people fail to obey.

For Families With Older Kids and Teenagers: Parents read the summary of the passage to discover the context of this historical event.

As a family read 1 Kings 8:22-53 (Solomon’s prayer).

1. What can we learn about God’s character & action from Solomon’s prayer?
2. Solomon repeats the phrase, “then hear”... through out his prayer. What does this imply the people of God will do?
3. Solomon gives us a model for prayer: beginning with praise (vs. 23-24) then asking for help (vs. 25-53). Why is this an important “flow” to remember in praying to God? Why do we sometimes jump right to asking things from God? How can remembering who God is guide us in asking God for help/blessing?
4. Solomon lists future events that will require God’s help, what are situations our family is now facing which we can ask for God’s help in? What do we know to be true about God’s character that directly relates to these situations?
5. Spend time as a family memorizing the key verse of the week (1 Kgs 8:52).

Looking Forward to Easter

1. How does this story look forward to Jesus? (Notice how often Solomon asks God to be forgiving.)
2. Read Romans 5:15-18 to finish your time together.

Digging Deeper...

So far we have seen many prayers from different people in very different times (refer to earlier studies), but now the question is, how did God’s people become God’s people? Read Genesis 17:1-8 and note the promise God made to Abraham that led to the different scene’s we have studied so far and to prepare for the upcoming sermon.

For Families With Younger Kids

“Simple” Summary of the Situation

God’s people are having a huge celebration, a party, because the temple was finished. The temple was the one huge, fancy, special place where all of God’s people would come for special times to worship God. To celebrate this day, Solomon, the king of Israel, stood in front of all the people of Israel, spread out his arms toward the sky and prayed.

Solomon started his prayer with praise. God is the one, true, powerful God, and He loves His people. He shows this love by keeping His promises. One of God’s promises was to be present in the temple. The people of Israel could come there and ask for protection, for blessings, and for forgiveness.

The Temple Was a Special Place for God’s People, Israel

1. Where is our special place to worship and pray?
2. Do we have to go to church to worship and pray?

A Time for Family Prayer

3. What can you praise God for this week?
4. Would you like to ask for protection from God?
5. What blessings from God will you ask for?
6. Do you need to ask God to forgive you for something?

FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE WEEK 5

God provides the Sacrifice (Genesis 22)

“Abraham answered, ‘God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son’...”

Genesis 22:8a

Summary of the Passage: This is a climactic passage in Genesis that takes place near the end of Abraham’s life. God tells Abraham to sacrifice his one and only son, the very son God promised, Isaac. Although it is difficult, Abraham shows remarkable trust in God, especially when the death of Isaac would appear to contradict all that God had promised to Abraham. In this passage, we see, along with Paul, that Abraham is “fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised” (Romans 4:21) and even the death of the promised son wouldn’t stop God from being faithful.

For Families With Older Kids and Teenagers: Parents read the summary of the passage to discover the context of this historical event.

As a family read Genesis 22 (Abraham’s test of faith in God).

1. What can we learn about God’s character and action from this story?
2. God recognized Abraham’s love for his son... this is the 1st time the word “love” (vs. 2) is used in the Bible. What are examples of love we share as a family that are recognizable to others?
3. Also, this is the first time the word “worship” (vs. 5) is used in the Bible. What elements were part of the worship in Abraham’s family? How can we include elements of that type of worship in our family?
4. Abraham had faith God would provide another sacrifice but was willing to be obedient to God despite his feelings. What is something that God is asking us to do as a family that we must be obedient in, no matter the feelings we may have?
5. Spend time as a family memorizing the key verse of the week (Genesis 22:8).

Looking Forward to Easter

1. How does this story look forward to Jesus?
2. Read Hebrews 9:27 to finish your time together.

Digging Deeper...

In this passage God promised to Abraham that he would bless the world through his descendants (Genesis 17:4-8). Read John 8:56: according to this passage, to whom did Abraham look forward to as the fulfillment of this promise?

For Families With Younger Kids

“Simple” Summary of the Situation

Abraham and his wife Sarah had waited a long time to have a child. When their son Isaac was born Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90! God had promised them a son, and He always keeps His promises. Imagine how happy Sarah and Abraham must have been to have this special baby! Then, one day when Isaac was a boy, God asked Abraham to do something very strange. He asked him to take him to a mountain, build an altar of rocks, put wood on it, and then kill Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering to God.

God’s Strange Request

1. How do you think Abraham would have felt when he heard God tell Him to do this horrible thing?
2. Why would God ask Abraham to do this?

Give Up What We Love: From Genesis 22:1 we know that God was testing Abraham to see if he would obey no matter what. Verse 2 tells us that God knew that Abraham loved Isaac very much.

3. What would it mean if Abraham was willing to give up his son, that he had waited so long for, because God asked him to?
4. Would you be willing to give up the things or people most important to you for God if He asked you to?

Abraham was willing to do what God asked him. When he and his son were walking up the mountain, Isaac asked where the animal to sacrifice would come from and Abraham said, God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”

5. Do you think Abraham was hoping God would change the plan?
6. How do you think Abraham & Isaac felt as they walked up the mountain?

Abraham was right, God did bring an animal to take Isaac’s place as the sacrifice. God promised to bless Abraham and his family because he was willing to give God what he loved most, his son Isaac.

A Time for Family Prayer

- What do you love most?
- Would you be willing to give it up for God?
- Abraham, deep down in his heart, knew that God would do what He promised him? Do you believe that God will do what He has promised you with Jesus?

FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE WEEK 6

The Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:28-44)

"... 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!'..." Luke 19:38a

Summary of the Passage: After a long and difficult ministry throughout the regions of Israel, in the last week of His life, Jesus enters Jerusalem and is praised by the crowd as the "One who comes in the Name of the Lord" (Luke 19:28). As He draws closer to the city, however, Jesus begins to weep, knowing that they will reject their promised King.

For Families With Older Kids and Teenagers: Parents read the summary of the passage to discover the context of this historical event.

As a family read Luke 19:28-44 (Jesus' entry to Jerusalem).

1. What can we learn about Jesus from the actions and words of the people?
2. What kind of reception would Jesus get if he rode into our town?
3. Why do you think the religious leaders of the day were upset by the reception the people gave Jesus?
4. What caused Jesus to weep over Jerusalem (vs. 41)?
5. How did Jesus enter your life? Share stories of your journey to faith in Jesus Christ.
6. Spend time as a family memorizing the key verse of the week (Luke 19:38a).

Looking forward to Easter

1. How does this story look forward to the treatment Jesus received from these same people a few days later? (Read Mark 15:6-15 for more discussion.)
2. Read 1 Peter 2:22-25 to finish your time together.

Digging Deeper...

This holy week has many different stories that contribute to the miracle that is Easter. Take time through out the week to read the continued story from the Triumphal entry. For special significance, read on:

Thursday - Luke 22:7-53

Friday - Luke 22:26-56

Saturday - Luke 24:1-12 (looking forward to Easter Sunday)

For Families With Younger Kids

“Simple” Summary of the Situation

Jesus is riding into Jerusalem like a king, the king the people have all been waiting for. At this time Israel was under the control of another king, the leader of the Roman Empire. They looked forward to the day that a new king in the family of King David would be back on the throne in Jerusalem. They were probably hoping that Jesus was going to be their king, drive out the Romans, and bring back the days of glory and power in Israel. But Jesus knows this is not what is going to happen. In just a few days Jesus will be arrested, tried as a criminal, and die on the cross.

As Jesus sees the city of Jerusalem, He stops and cries for Jerusalem and the people who live there. He knows that they will reject Him and in the coming years the city will be destroyed.

Following Jesus

1. What does it mean to follow Jesus today?
2. How can we make Jesus the King of our lives?

Looking to the future

3. What do you hope your future holds?

Just as Jesus knew the future of Jerusalem, he knows your future.

4. When Jesus looks at your future, what do you hope He sees?

Jerusalem did not accept Jesus as their spiritual King and Messiah. Their future was going to be hard and painful. God blesses His people, the one's who accept Him as King and Ruler of their lives. This doesn't mean life is easy or perfect, but it does mean that God will be with you through everything that will happen in your life.

A Time for Family Prayer

Spend some time praying about the future of your family. How will you make sure that Jesus is the King of your home?

FAMILY WORSHIP & PARENTING RESOURCES

SOUTH SHORES ONLINE RESOURCES

Watch the Sunday Videos on www.southshores.org

South Shores Middle School Ministry Parent-Link Blog
<http://www.southshoresride.com/category/parent-link/>

South Shores High School Ministry Parent-Link Blog:
<http://corefellowship.com/blogs/parent-link/>

OTHER INTERNET RESOURCES

http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/spiritual_growth_for_kids

<http://theresurgence.com/categories/education>

<http://theresurgence.com/categories/discipline>

BOOKS ON GODLY PARENTING

Spiritual Parenting: An Awakening For Today's Families
by Michelle Anthony

Shepherding a Child's Heart
by Tedd Tripp

Gospel-Centered Family
by Ed Moll and Tim Chester

Give Them Grace
by Elyse Fitzpatrick and Jessica Thompson

BOOKS ON FAMILY WORSHIP

Family Worship: In the Bible, In History & In Your House
by Donald Whitney

Family Worship
by Joel R. Beeke

The Family at Church
by Joel R. Beeke

Help Us Make This Better!

Your input is greatly appreciated and valued in order to make future versions of these devotional guides more helpful for the church body as a whole.

Email pastordave@southshores.org with your stories, comments, insights, feedback and questions.

**WE WILL TELL
THE NEXT
GENERATION
THE PRAISEWORTHY
DEEDS OF
THE LORD...**

PSALM 78:4